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ABSTRACT

New Jersey's Vineland High School North faced many behavioral and vandalism problems during its first year of operation (1976-77) and adopted a program to improve this situation during its second year. This effort involved adoption and thorough dissemination of student rules, a series of parent orientation meetings, a new community information program, the creation of a Parent Teacher Association, an inservice program in humanistic education, a peer leadership program, and the hiring of paraprofessionals to improve communication between home and school. During the program's initial year, vandalism dropped substantially and most student behavior improved. Suspension figures were higher due to greater attention to the problems that remained. The need for police intervention was greatly reduced, although arrest levels remained near the original level. The problems, their causes, the program designed to solve them, and the results of that program are described briefly in this speech. (Author/PGD)

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A PROGRAM TO REDUCE VANDALISM AND TO IMPROVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR AT VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SCHOOL PROPERTY DAMAGE, OUTRIGHT VANDALISM AND UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR ARE CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS OF PARENTS, EDUCATORS AND CITIZENS EVERYWHERE. THE VARIETY OF PROBLEMS CONNOTED BY THESE TOPICS ARE SO NUMEROUS THAT THEY STAGGER EVEN A DREAMER'S IMAGINATION. EFFORTS AND TECHNIQUES ARE BEING DESIGNED AND EMPLOYED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO COPE WITH, NEUTRALIZE OR AT LEAST IMPACT UPON EACH OF THESE ISSUES. REGRETTABLY, HOWEVER, THE SITUATION SEEMS TO BE GETTING WORSE INSTEAD OF BETTER; BROADER IN SCOPE AND CONSEQUENCES RATHER THAN TAPERING OFF IN RESPONSE TO THE MANY APPLIED STRATEGIES.

IN THIS CLIMATE OF CHALLENGE, THE VINELAND PROJECT WAS BORN. AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, THE COMMUNITY AND THE SHCOOL SYSTEM MIRROR THE NATIONAL DILEMMA. VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH, WITH A STUDENT POPULATION OF NEARLY 2000, PROVIDED A LOGICAL SITE FOR THIS PROJECT BECAUSE IT IS A NEW BUILDING WHERE VANDALISM AND POOR BEHAVIOR WERE IDENTIFIED AS SERIOUS PROBLEMS DURING

THE 1976-1977 (OPENING) YEAR.

THUS, THE PROBLEM OF REDUCING VANDALISM AND IMPROVING STUDENT BEHAVIOR WAS SELECTED AS A NOVA UNIVERSITY PRACTICUM PROJECT BY THIS EDUCATOR.

PLANS FOR THE PROJECT WERE DESIGNED DURING THE SUMMER OF 1977 AND A DECISION WAS MADE TO IMPACT UPON THE STUDENTS, THE STAFF AND THE PARENTS. THE PROJECT WAS LAUNCHED WITH EIGHT PARENT ORIENTATION SESSIONS DURING AUGUST, 1977, AND THE REST IS NOW HISTORY. THE PROJECT'S STORY -- ITS OPTIMISM AND ITS REALITIES, ITS SUCCESSES AND ITS FAILURES, ITS INNOVATIONS AND ITS ADOPTIONS, ITS FUNDING AND ITS EVALUATION -- IS RECORDED IN THE FULL PRACTICUM REPORT ON FILE AT NOVA UNIVERSITY. THIS TESTIMONY SHALL BE LIMITED TO A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE ACTION RESEARCH.

DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH WAS PLAGUED WITH A RASH OF VANDALISM WHICH CAUSED $26,000 OF DESTRUCTION DURING THE 1976-1977 SCHOOL YEAR. SIMULTANEOUSLY, POOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR RESULTED IN:

1658 STUDENT DETENTION OFFENSES

161 STUDENT SUSPENSION OFFENSES

67 POLICE ASSISTS AT THE SCHOOL

33 POLICE ARRESTS OF STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL

ACTS OF VANDALISM INCLUDED THE DESTRUCTION OF BUILDING CEILINGS, ELECTRICAL SWITCHES AND RECEPTACLES, MIRRORS, PAPER AND SOAP DISPENSERS, WATER CLOSET PARTITIONS, WINDOWS, SIGNS, LIGHTING FIXTURES, TELEPHONES, WATER FOUNTAINS, STAIRWAY BANNISTERS, BATHROOM FIXTURES, AUDITORIUM SEATS, DOORS, AND PAINTED WALLS. THE ITEMIZED 1976-1977 INVENTORY AND DOLLAR COST PROVIDE AN

EVEN MORE GRAPHIC PICTURE OF THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM:

VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH
VANDALISM INVENTOPY, 1976-1977

LAVATORY DESTRUCTION

NUMBER	ITEM	COST
36	CEILINGS	$ 180
4	ELECTRIC SWITCHES	100
4	ELECTRIC RECEPTACLES	100
18	HAND TOWEL DISPENSERS	900
36	MIRRORS	1800
50	PAPER DISPENSERS	1250
50	SOAP DISPENSERS	1250
17	SANITARY NAPKIN DISPENSERS	1700
26	DOORS AND PARTITIONS FOR WATER CLOSETS	2000
2	SINKS	400
5	TOILETS	1250
10	TOILET SEATS	200
10	TOILET SEATS	200
12	STAINLESS STEAL DOOR HAND PLATES	240
1	SINK TRAP	20
30	BATHROOM PAINT JOBS	600

SHOWER ROOM

NUMBER	ITEM	COST	
1	CEILING	$ 500	
CORRIDORS			
275-300	CEILING TILES	$ 1500	($5.00 EA.)
8	PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM SPEAKERS	400	
12	CLIMATE CONTROL THERMOSTATS	600	
STAIRWELLS			
4	COMPLETELY REPAINTED	$ 1000	
1	RAILING	500	
SWIMMING POOL			
2	PUBLIC ADDRESS WALL SPEAKERS	$ 400	
SAFETY EGRESS TOWERS			
2	TOWER INTERIOR REPAINTED	$ 1500	
4	BANNISTERS	400	
4	TOWER DOOR HARDWARE	600	
WINDOWS			
13	THERMOPANE CLASSROOM WINDOWS	$ 650	
12	DOOR WINDOWS	600	
3	THERMOPANE HALL BAY WINDOWS	250	

LIGHTING

NUMBER	ITEM	COST
21	EXIT SIGN	$ 840
1	SAFETY TOWER LIGHT FIXTURE	100
3	LIGHTING FIXTURES	500
AUDITORIUM		
4	SEATS	$ 400
36	SEATS	360
1	STAGE MOLDING	300
CHORAL ROOM		
1	STAGE MOLDING	$ 100
BAND ROOM		
1	STAGE MOLDING	$ 100
TELEPHONES		
5	TELEPHONES RIPPED FROM WALL AND STOLEN	$ 250
WATER FOUNTAINS		
40	FOUNTAIN HEADS	$ 1000

EXTERIOR WALLS

NUMBER	ITEM	COST
ENTIRE	EXTERIOR WALL MARKED WITH GRAFFITI	$ 1200
1	WALL SECTION PAINTED	675
2	WALL SECTION PAINTED	720

EQUIPMENT

3	COOLING TOWERS	$ 300
3	COPPER TUBES	300
	TOTAL COST	$25,335

ACTS OF MISBEHAVIOR INCLUDED THE VIOLATION OF SCHOOL RULES AGAINST:

1. CUTTING CLASS
2. BEING DISRESPECTFUL TO ADULTS
3. CREATING DISTURBANCES
4. LEAVING CLASS EARLY
5. MISSING A DETENTION ASSIGNMENT
6. ROAMING THE HALLS OF THE SCHOOL

7. Smoking
8. Being tardy
9. Possessing or smoking drugs
10. Fighting
11. Selling drugs
12. Setting fires
13. Pulling false fire alarms

OBJECTIVES

THIS PERVASIVE AND SEVERE PROBLEM PROMPTED FIVE OBJECTIVES:

1. REDUCE THE IDENTIFIED VANDALISM DOLLAR COSTS OF THE 1976-1977 SCHOOL YEAR AT VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH BY 25% IN TEN MONTHS (SEPTEMBER, 1977, THROUGH JUNE, 1978).

2. IMPROVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR WITHIN AN EIGHT MONTH TIME FRAME (NOVEMBER, 1977 THROUGH JUNE, 1978) TO ACHIEVE AT LEAST THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIED REDUCTIONS IN EACH SELECTED STUDENT DETENTION OFFENSE:

DETENTION OFFENSE	TARGETED REDUCTION
LEAVING CLASS EARLY	25%
MISSING TEACHER'S DETENTION	25%
ROAMING HALLS	25%
SMOKING	25%
TARDINESS	25%
CUTTING CLASS	20%
DISRESPECT TO ADULTS	20%
GENERAL DISTURBANCES	20%

3. IMPROVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR WITHIN AN EIGHT MONTH TIME FRAME (NOVEMBER, 1977, THROUGH JUNE, 1978) TO ACHIEVE AT LEAST THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIED REDUCTIONS IN EACH SELECTED STUDENT SUSPENSION OFFENSES:

OFFENSE	TARGETED REDUCTION
DRUG ABUSE	25%
FAILURE TO REPORT FOR AFTER-SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION	25%
FIGHTING	25%
CUTTING CLASS	20%
DISRESPECT	20%
SALE OF DRUGS	20%

4. INCREASE THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND IMPROVE THE BEHAVIOR OF THE STUDENTS AT VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH TO THE DEGREE THAT 35% LESS VINELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT ASSISTS WILL HAVE BEEN NECESSITATED DURING THE 1977-1978 SCHOOL YEAR WHEN COMPARED WITH THE RECORDED ASSISTS OF THE 1976-1977 SCHOOL YEAR.

5. INCREASE THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND IMPROVE THE BEHAVIOR OF THE STUDENTS AT VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH TO THE DEGREE THAT 25% LESS POLICE ARRESTS OF STUDENTS WILL HAVE BEEN NECESSARY DURING THE 1977-1978 SCHOOL YEAR WHEN COMPARED WITH THE RECORDED ARRESTS OF THE 1976-1977 SCHOOL YEAR.

ANALYSIS OF CAUSES

An objective examination of the school situation indicated that a myriad of forces were contributing to the problem. Brainstorming, interview techniques, and observation suggested the following to be possible causes:

1. The students were not fully aware of the school rules and regulations.
2. The parents were not adequately oriented to the school or to the school rules and regulations.
3. The information program about the school conducted in the local newspaper was neither focused nor comprehensive.
4. The teaching staff was not totally committed to giving time and effort to a program to improve student behavior and to reduce vandalism.
5. There was no Parent-Teacher Association to support the school staff and to educate the parents.

6. THERE WAS NO CONCERTED EFFORT TO HAVE THE STAFF EMPLOY HUMANISTIC, AFFECTIVE TEACHING TECHNIQUES IN THE CLASSROOM.
7. THE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES WERE NOT WELL-DEFINED NOR CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY THE STUDENTS, PARENTS, OR STAFF.
8. PUBLICITY ABOUT THE SCHOOL WAS GENERALLY NEGATIVE AND CONCENTRATED ON THE STUDENT MISBEHAVIOR AND THE DEEDS OF THE VANDALS.
9. THE STUDENTS HAD ONLY LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES TO BECOME INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES WHERE THEY COULD ACHIEVE AND DEVELOP PRIDE IN THEMSELVES AND THEIR SCHOOL.
10. THERE WERE INSUFFICIENT PERSONNEL TO VISIT HOMES, TO ARRANGE PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES, TO FACILITATE HOME AND SCHOOL UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION AND TO AGGRESSIVELY DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS OF TARDINESS AND TRUANCY.

STRATEGIES TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

FOLLOWING AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF THIS PROBLEM, SEVERAL STRATEGIES WERE EMPLOYED TO IMPROVE THE STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF VANDALISM.

1. A STUDENT HANDBOOK CONTAINING THE SCHOOL RULES AND REGULATIONS WAS PRODUCED AND A COPY PRESENTED TO EACH STUDENT ON THE OPENING DAY OF SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER, 1977.
2. A SERIES OF EIGHT ORIENTATION MEETINGS FOR PARENTS WAS CONDUCTED PRIOR TO THE OPENING OF SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER - TWO OF THESE WITH AN INTERPRETER TO ACCOMMODATE SPANISH SPEAKING PARENTS.
3. QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE PARENTS AT THE ORIENTATION MEETINGS WERE RECORDED TO PROVIDE A BASIS FOR THE NEW COMMUNITY INFORMATION PROGRAM INAUGURATED BY THE SCHOOL.
4. THE COOPERATION OF THE STAFF WAS ENLISTED IN THE CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND TO REDUCE VANDALISM. MANY

DEPARTMENTS VOLUNTEERED TO CONDUCT DEPARTMENTAL "OPEN HOUSE FOR PARENTS" AT WHICH THE STUDENTS WERE TO SERVE AS TOUR GUIDES AND TO EXPLAIN THE OPERATION OF THE DEPARTMENT TO THEIR PARENTS.

5. DEFINITE STEPS WERE PURSUED TO ORGANIZE A PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION.
6. THE TEACHERS RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT HUMANISTIC, AFFECTIVE EDUCATION TECHNIQUES AND WERE AFFORDED OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTEND WORKSHOPS WHICH PROMOTE SUCH TECHNIQUES.
7. THE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES WERE ENUMERATED AND ADVERTISED AT THE OPENING OF SCHOOL TO AFFORD THE STAFF MEMBERS AND THE STUDENTS AN IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITY TO KNOW AND TO UNDERSTAND THE CONSEQUENCES OF STUDENT OFFENSES.
8. A NEW SCHOOL PUBLICITY PROGRAM WAS IMPLEMENTED WHICH WAS AIMED AT PUBLICIZING STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN EACH DEPARTMENT AS WELL AS THE MAJOR ASPECTS OF THE TOTAL SCHOOL

PROGRAM. THIS COMMUNICATION PROGRAM ALSO WAS DESIGNED TO RESPOND ACCURATELY TO ALL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SCHOOL.

9. MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT INVOLVEMENT WERE INCLUDED SUCH AS THE "OPEN HOUSE FOR PARENTS," STUDENT GOOD TURN PROJECTS AND STUDENT EXHIBITS.

10. FOUR PARA-PROFESSIONALS WERE EMPLOYED TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE HOME AND THE SCHOOL AND TO IMPROVE STUDENT PROMPTNESS AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

11. A PEER LEADERSHIP PROGRAM WAS INSTITUTED.

AS IS EVIDENT, AND IN SUMMARY, A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH WAS ADOPTED TO COPE WITH THE PERVASIVE PROBLEM OF SCHOOL VANDALISM AND TO IMPROVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR -- VEXING PROBLEMS WHICH WERE GNAWING AT THE PATIENCE AND THE CONSCIENCE OF LOCAL EDUCATORS AND CITIZENS ALIKE.

ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

THE FIRST OBJECTIVE OF THIS PROJECT WAS TO REDUCE THE $25,335 VANDALISM COSTS OF THE 1976-1977 SCHOOL YEAR AT VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH BY AT LEAST 25% DURING 1977-1978. VANDALISM COSTS ACTUALLY DECLINED BY 61%, OR $15,501, DURING THE PRACTICUM YEAR; THEREFORE, THIS OBJECTIVE WAS ACCOMPLISHED.

THE SECOND OBJECTIVE WAS AIMED AT THE IMPROVEMENT OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR.

DURING THE PROJECT YEAR, THERE WAS A:

51% REDUCTION IN LEAVING CLASS EARLY

31% REDUCTION IN MISSING TEACHER'S DETENTION

82% REDUCTION IN THE ROAMING OF HALLS

84% REDUCTION IN SMOKING

56% REDUCTION IN TARDINESS

85% REDUCTION IN DISRESPECT TO ADULTS

174% INCREASE IN CUTTING CLASS

16% INCREASE IN GENERAL DISTURBANCES

THE INCREASES NOTED IN DETENTIONS FOR THE LATTER TWO BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS, WHILE ALARMING, ARE TEMPERED BY THE FACT THAT THE PROJECT STRATEGIES MADE POSSIBLE THE IDENTIFICATION OF EVERY STUDENT OFFENSE - MANY OF WHICH WOULD HAVE REMAINED UNDETECTED IN THE PRE-PROJECT YEAR. THUS, THESE INCREASES PROBABLY REFLECT A STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE RULES AND REGULATIONS RATHER THAN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN CUTTING CLASS AND GENERAL DISTURBANCES. IN THE PRE-PROJECT YEAR, SO MUCH TIME AND EFFORT WERE REQUIRED TO "JUST KEEP THE LID ON" THAT SOME DISTURBANCES AND MANY CLASS CUTS WERE SIMPLY NOT RESOLVED.

THE THIRD OBJECTIVE ZEROED IN ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THOSE MORE SERIOUS BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS WHICH RESULT IN SUSPENSION.

DURING THE PROJECT YEAR, STUDENTS WHO WERE APPREHENDED SELLING DRUGS WERE REFERRED TO THE POLICE AND, SUBSEQUENTLY, ARRESTED; THEREFORE, THERE WERE NO SUSPENSIONS IN THIS CATEGORY. HOWEVER, THERE WAS A:

155% INCREASE IN CUTTING CLASS

18% INCREASE IN DISRESPECT

23% DECREASE IN DRUG ABUSE

25% DECREASE IN THE FAILURE TO REPORT FOR AFTER-SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION

16% INCREASE IN FIGHTING

OVERALL, THERE WAS A 76% INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS ADMINISTERED DURING THE PROJECT YEAR. THEREFORE, BASED PURELY ON THE NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS ADMINISTERED, THIS OBJECTIVE WAS ACHIEVED IN ONLY ONE INSTANCE - HAVING MORE STUDENTS REPORT FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION. ALSO, IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT THE TARGETED REDUCTION OF 25% IN DRUG ABUSE WAS NEARLY (23%) ACHIEVED.

HOWEVER, THE SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN SUSPENSIONS COUPLED WITH THE 61% DECREASE IN VANDALISM AND THE EXPRESSED FEELING OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS THAT BEHAVIOR WAS MUCH BETTER AT VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH DURING THIS PROJECT YEAR MAY INDICATE

THAT A SEVERE CONSEQUENCE, SUCH AS SUSPENSION, DOES SERVE AS A DETERENT TO VANDALISM AND MISBEHAVIOR. THIS INFERENCE IS SOMEWHAT SUPPORTED BY THE SAFE SCHOOL STUDY REPORT TO THE CONGRESS[1] WHICH FOUND DISCIPLINE TO BE RANKED FIRST BY PRINCIPALS, STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AS A SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY IN REDUCING VANDALISM AND IMPROVING BEHAVIOR. AMONG ALL THE COMMON DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES, SUSPENSION AND PADDLING ARE LISTED AS THE MOST WIDELY USED METHODS IN THE NATION. IN NEW JERSEY, PADDLING OF STUDENTS IS NOT PERMITTED BY STATUTE; THEREFORE, SUSPENSION REMAINS THE AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVE. THUS, WHILE THE REDUCTION IN SUSPENSIONS AT VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH WHICH WAS SOUGHT WAS NOT ACHIEVED, THIS FACT ITSELF MAY BE PROPHETIC. ALSO, IT DOES SERVE TO INDICATE THAT THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE AT VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH REMAINED

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[1]VIOLENT SCHOOLS - SAFE SCHOOLS, THE SAFE SCHOOL STUDY REPORT TO THE CONGRESS, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (WASHINGTON, D.C.: NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION; 1978), PP. 1-14.

FAIR, FIRM, AND CONSISTENT THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT. SUCH CONSISTENCY ALSO CHARACTERIZED EVERY SCHOOL IN THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION REPORT WHICH HAD A HISTORY OF PROBLEMS WITH CRIME AND VIOLENCE, BUT HAD IMPROVED DRAMATICALLY IN A SHORT TIME.

THE THRUST OF THE FOURTH OBJECTIVE WAS TO IMPROVE THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE BEHAVIOR OF THE STUDENTS. THESE IMPROVEMENTS IN STUDENT SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BEHAVIOR WERE TO RESULT IN AT LEAST A 35% DROP IN THE NEED FOR POLICE ASSISTANCE AT VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH DURING THE 1977-1978 SCHOOL YEAR. IN FACT, A 96% REDUCTION IN POLICE ASSISTANCE WAS REALIZED DURING THE 1977-1978 PROJECT YEAR. THUS, THE NEED FOR POLICE INTERVENTION AND/OR ASSISTANCE AT THE SCHOOL WAS VIRTUALLY ELIMINATED, CLEARLY MAKING THIS OBJECTIVE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL STATISTICAL ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PRACTICUM YEAR. ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION SUGGEST THAT SUCH A DRAMATIC ACHIEVEMENT

MAY BE TRACED, AT LEAST IN PART, TO THE STRATEGY WHICH ADDED THE TWO ATTENDANCE ASSOCIATES AND TWO HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION FACILITATORS WHO, ACCORDING TO THEIR JOB DESCRIPTIONS, SUPPLEMENTED THE WORK OF ATTENDANCE OFFICERS, SOCIAL WORKERS AND GUIDANCE COUNSELORS. THE MAIN IDEA WAS TO COMMUNICATE WITH EACH STUDENT AND HIS/HER PARENTS AS FREQUENTLY AS NECESSARY TO ENCOURAGE AND INSIST THAT THE STUDENT ACCEPT HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS A MEMBER OF THE HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY. THE PARA-PROFESSIONALS CARRIED OUT THE PRESCRIBED DUTIES CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND TENACIOUSLY. HENCE, THE POSITIVE RESULTS SUGGEST THAT THERE MAY BE CONSIDERABLE MERIT TO THE IMMEDIATE MONITORING OF UNACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN ORDER TO EFFECT AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE CONDUCT OF SCHOOL YOUTH.

THE FIFTH (LAST) OBJECTIVE INTENDED TO INCREASE THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND IMPROVE THE BEHAVIOR OF THE STUDENTS AT VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT POLICE ARRESTS

OF VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH STUDENTS WOULD DECREASE BY AT LEAST 25% WHEN COMPARED WITH THE ARRESTS OF THE PRIOR (1976-1977) SCHOOL YEAR. AT BEST, THE DATA COLLECTED FOR ANALYSIS IN ORDER TO ASSESS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THIS OBJECTIVE PROVIDE INTERESTING, BUT INCONCLUSIVE, RESULTS. IN 1976-1977, STUDENTS WERE ARRESTED FOR FIFTEEN DIFFERENT VIOLATIONS OF LAWS INCLUDING ASSAULT AND BATTERY, AUTO THEFT, CARRYING A CONCEALED DEADLY WEAPON, CONTRIBUTING TO THE DELINQUENCY OF A MINOR, DISORDERLY CONDUCT, FALSE FIRE ALARM, LARCENY, MALICIOUS DAMAGE TO AN AUTOMOBILE, MALICIOUS DAMAGE TO THE SCHOOL, POSSESSION OF DRUGS, THREATENING BEHAVIOR, TRESPASSING, RESISTING ARREST, TRUANCY, AND INCORRIGIBLE BEHAVIOR. IN THE PROJECT YEAR, ARRESTS FOR SEVEN OF THESE VIOLATIONS DID NOT REOCCUR - AUTO THEFT, CARRYING A CONCEALED DEADLY WEAPON, CONTRIBUTING TO THE DELINQUENCY OF A MINOR, FALSE FIRE ALARM, MALICIOUS DAMAGE TO AN AUTOMOBILE, MALICIOUS DAMAGE TO THE

SCHOOL, AND RESISTING ARREST. ALTHOUGH THE ELIMINATION OF ARRESTS IN SEVEN CATEGORIES WAS FAVORABLE, ARRESTS IN THREE NEW CATEGORIES WERE RECORDED DURING THE PROJECT YEAR - ARSON, ATROCIOUS ASSAULT AND BATTERY AND EXTORTION, AND POSSESSION AND SALE OF DRUGS.

IN ADDITION TO THE SEVEN VIOLATIONS OF LAW WHICH DID NOT REOCCUR DURING THE PROJECT, THE TARGETED 25% REDUCTION OF ARRESTS WAS ACHIEVED IN THREE CATEGORIES - ASSAULT AND BATTERY (90% REDUCTION), LARCENY (25% REDUCTION), AND THREATENING BEHAVIOR (50% REDUCTION).

ARRESTS ACTUALLY INCREASED IN FIVE CATEGORIES - DISORDERLY PERSON (300% INCREASE), POSSESSION OF DRUGS (133% INCREASE), TRESPASSING (100% INCREASE), TRUANCY (500% INCREASE), TRUANCY AND INCORRIGIBLE BEHAVIOR (100% INCREASE).

THUS, THE DATA RECORDED DEMONSTRATES THAT THIS FIFTH OBJECTIVE:

1. WAS ACHIEVED IN TEN CATEGORIES
2. WAS NOT ACHIEVED IN EIGHT CATEGORIES. THREE OF THESE CATEGORIES WERE NEW VIOLATIONS OF LAW FOR WHICH ARRESTS WERE MADE ONLY IN THE PROJECT YEAR

THE SMALL 6% OVERALL REDUCTION IN STUDENT ARRESTS REALIZED DURING THE PROJECT YEAR WAS CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN 25% REDUCTION ANTICIPATED BY THIS OBJECTIVE.

THE ARREST DATA ALSO SUGGESTS SEVERAL ADDITIONAL FACTS WHICH SHOULD BE NOTED:

1. THE ARRESTS FOR ASSAULT AND BATTERY DECLINED SHARPLY DURING THE PROJECT YEAR
2. THE ARRESTS FOR BEING DISORDERLY, FOR DRUG OFFENSES, AND FOR TRUANCY INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY DURING THE PROJECT YEAR

ONE MAY CONSTRUE FROM THIS INFORMATION THAT THE ATTACKS ON THE PERSON OF OTHERS DECREASED AS A RESULT OF THE PROJECT

STRATEGIES. ALSO, THE FIRM, CONSISTENT LAW ENFORCEMENT MADE POSSIBLE BY THE PRACTICUM PLAN PROBABLY PERMITTED MORE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND POLICE ATTENTION TO BE DIRECTED TOWARD THE CRIMES OF DISORDERLINESS, POSSESSION AND/OR SALE OF DRUGS, AND TRUANCY.

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, IT MAY WELL BE THAT A SEVERE CONSEQUENCE, SUCH AS SUSPENSION (AS SUGGESTED EARLIER) OR ARREST, ACTUALLY DOES SERVE TO STIMULATE AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BEHAVIOR OF PROBLEM STUDENTS. SUCH A SUBJECTIVE CONCLUSION TENDS TO BE SUPPORTED BY THE FINDINGS OF THE SAFE SCHOOL STUDY REPORT.

IMPLICATIONS

THIS PROJECT HAS PROVIDED SUSTANTIAL SUPPORT FOR THE THESIS THAT THE COST OF VANDALISM COMMITTED BY STUDENTS MAY BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF A SERIES OF WELL-PLANNED STRATEGIES ADOPTED FROM RESEARCH. SUCH AN ECLECTIC APPROACH APPEARS TO HAVE UNIQUE ADAPTABILITY VALUE FOR THE LOCAL SITUATION. ALSO, IT SEEMS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT A HEAVY INFUSION OF TIME AND EFFORT ON THE PART OF STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS WAS REQUIRED DURING THIS NOVA UNIVERSITY PRACTICUM WHICH MAY ITSELF BE A KEY FACTOR IN SUCCESSFULLY REDUCING THE DAMAGE DONE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY BY SOME STUDENTS.

A SECOND, AND POSSIBLY MORE CONTROVERSIAL, IMPLICATION WHICH MAY BE INFERRED AS A RESULT OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE DATA GATHERED DURING THIS PROJECT IS THAT AN INCREASE IN DETENTIONS AND SUSPENSIONS OF STUDENTS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT

STUDENT BEHAVIOR IS DETERIORATING OR GETTING POORER. IN FACT, THE OPPOSITE MAY BE TRUE. AN INCREASE IN DETENTIONS AND SUSPENSIONS FOR IDENTIFIED OFFENSES, AND CONSISTENCY IN AWARDING THESE CONSEQUENCES TO EVERY OFFENDER, MAY ACTUALLY SERVE TO IMPROVE THE BEHAVIOR OF MANY OF THE STUDENTS.

A THIRD IMPLICATION OF THIS STUDY MAY AFFECT THE JOB ASSIGNMENTS WHICH ARE AWARDED TO PARA-PROFESSIONALS IN THE STAFFING OF SCHOOLS. THE DATA REVEALED THAT THE USE OF PARA-PROFESSIONALS AS QUASI-COUNSELORS AND HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATORS MAY SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE THE NEED FOR POLICE ASSISTANCE AT THE SCHOOL. OBVIOUSLY, SUCH COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS, AS WELL AS THE AVAILABILITY OF MORE ADULTS TO TALK WITH STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL, AFFORD ADDITIONAL ATTRACTIVE EDUCATIONAL REASONS FOR GIVING IN-DEPTH CONSIDERATION TO THESE OPTIONS.

A FOURTH IMPLICATION SUGGESTS THAT THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT STUDENT VIOLATIONS WHICH WARRANT ARREST SEEMS TO DECREASE WHEN

THE OVERALL SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CLIMATE IMPROVES. A CORRELARY TO THIS IS THAT THE DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT OFFENSES SEEMS TO ALLOW THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES TO ZERO IN ON THE OFFENSES MORE COMMONLY COMMITTED BY STUDENTS INCLUDING THE POSSESSION AND/OR SALE OF DRUGS, DISORDERLINESS AND TRUANCY.

TWO IMPLICATIONS WERE CONVINCINGLY CONVEYED TO THE PARTICIPANT DURING THIS PRACTICUM:

1. THE PRINCIPAL, AS THE EDUCATIONAL LEADER OF THE SCHOOL, WIELDS GREAT INFLUENCE AND PROBABLY MUST ACCEPT THE GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY FOR INSTITUTING PROGRAMS TO EFFECTIVELY REDUCE VANDALISM AND TO IMPROVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR AT THE SCHOOL BUILDING LEVEL
2. STUDENTS, PARENTS AND TEACHERS ARE MOST WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF BEHAVIOR AND THE REDUCTION OF VANDALISM AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL WHEN THEY HAVE MEANINGFUL DIRECTION, A

DEFINITE PROGRAM, AND ADMINISTRATORS WHO ARE WILLING TO WORK WITH THEM BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF VANDALISM AT VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH FOR 1976-1977 AND 1977-1978 SCHOOL YEARS

Vandalism Cost In Dollars 1976-1977 Year School Opened	Vandalism Cost In Dollars 1977-1978 Year of Program to Reduce Vandalism	Reduction of Vandalism Cost In Dollars During 1977-1978 Program	Targeted Percent Reduction in Dollar Cost Established For the 1977-1978 Program	Percent Reduction In Dollar Cost Realized During The 1977-1978 Program
$25,335	$9,834	$15,501	25%	61.18%

Table 6

Comparison of Student Detention Offenses at Vineland High School North for 1976-1977 and 1977-1978 School Years

Identified Behavior Problem	Number of Administrative Detentions 1976-1977 †	Number of Administrative Detentions 1977-1978†	Number of Detention Reductions During 1977-1978†	Number of Detention Increases During 1977-1978†	Targeted Percent Reduction Established For The 1977-1978† Program	Percent Detention Reduction Realized During 1977-1978†	Percent Detention Increase Realized During 1977-1978†
Cutting class	240	658	___	418	20%	___	174.17%
Disrespect to adults	88	13	75	___	20%	85.23%	___
General disturbances	195	226	___	31	20%	___	15.90%
Leaving class early	65	32	33	___	25%	50.77%	___
Missed teacher's detention	258	178	80	___	25%	31.01%	___
Roaming halls	114	20	94	___	25%	82.46%	___
Smoking	225	35	190	___	25%	84.44%	___
Tardiness	437	193	244	___	25%	55.84%	___
Miscellaneous	36	28	8	___	No target established	22.22%	___
Total Summary	1,658	1,383	724	449	___	16.59%	___

†November through June.

Table 7

Comparison of Student Suspension Offenses at Vineland High School North for 1976-1977 and 1977-1978 School Years

Identified Behavior Problem	Number of Suspensions 1976-1977+	Number of Suspensions 1977-1978+	Number of Suspension Reductions During 1977-1978+	Number of Suspension Increases During 1977-1978+	Targeted Percent Reduction Established for the 1977-1978+ Program	Percent Suspension Reduction Realized During 1977-1978+	Percent Suspension Increase Realized During 1977-1978+
Cutting class This includes: a. Leaving the school grounds without permission b. Habitually roaming the halls c. Being chronically late to class d. Failing to report to homeroom e. Trespassing at VHS South 11-12	58	148	—	90	20%	—	155.17%
Disrespect This includes: a. Defiance b. Using obscenities c. Using profanities	22	26	—	4	20%	—	18.18%
Drug Abuse This includes: a. Possession of drugs b. Smoking of drugs	13	10	3	—	25%	23.08%	—
Failure to report for after-school administrative detention	4	3	1	—	25%	25.00%	—
Fighting	57	66	—	9	25%	—	15.79%
Sale of drugs	4	0	4	0	20%	No Suspensions	—
Miscellaneous*	3	31	—	28	No target established	—	933.33%
Total Summary	161	284	8	131	—	—	76.40

+November through June.

*Miscellaneous offenses for which students were suspended:

1976-1977

1 - Possession of stolen property
1 - Starting a fire
1 - Pulling a fire alarm

1977-1978

6 - Stealing School property
2 - Starting a fire
1 - Striking a match in study hall
2 - Breaking into athletic trailer
2 - Female in restroom with two males
1 - Leaving school grounds in car
2 - Possession of ice pick
3 - Possession of knife
7 - Possession and/or throwing of firecrackers
1 - Removing teacher's keys from desk
2 - Repeated smoking infractions
2 - Throwing food in cafeteria

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF POLICE DEPARTMENT ASSISTS AT VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL NORTH FOR 1976-1977 AND 1977-1978 SCHOOL YEARS

Police Assists* 1976-1977 Year School Opened	Police Assists* 1977-1978 Year of Program to Improve Student Behavior	Number of Assist Reductions During 1977-1978	Targeted Percent Reduction Established for the 1977-1978 Program	Percent Assist Reduction Realized During 1977-1978
67	3	64	35%	95.52%

*Police assists were rendered as follows:

1976-1977

1. Returned truant students to school.
2. Discussed consequences of deliquent acts with offending students at the school conference room.
3. Requested parents to remove offending students from school premises.

1977-1978

1. Returned student to school who failed to report following expiration of suspension.
2. Issued warning to former student/drug pusher suspect to remain away from school.
3. Counseled parents whose son was found in possession of marijuana "roach."

Table 9

Comparison of Student Arrests at Vineland High School North for 1976-1977 and 1977-1978 School Year

Violation of Law	Number of Arrests 1976-1977	Number of Arrests 1977-1978	Number of Arrest Reductions During 1977-1978	Number of Arrest Increases During 1977-1978	Targeted Percent Reduction Established For The 1977-1978 Program	Percent Arrest Reduction Realized During 1977-1978	Percent Arrest Increase Realized During 1977-1978
Arson	0	1	___	1	25%	___	Arrests '77-'78 Only
Assault and battery	10	1	9	___	25%	90%	
Atrocious assault and battery and extortion	0	1	___	1	25%	___	Arrests '77-78 Only
Auto theft	1	0	1	___	25%	Arrests Eliminated	___
Carrying a concealed deadly weapon	2	0	2	___	25%	Arrests Eliminated	___
Contributing to the delinquency of a minor	1	0	1	___	25%	Arrests Eliminated	___
Disorderly person	1	4	___	3	25%	___	300%
False fire alarm	1	0	1	___	25%	Arrests Eliminated	___
Larceny	4	3	1	___	25%	25%	___
Malicious damage to automobile	1	0	1	___	25%	Arrests Eliminated	___
Malicious damage to school	3	0	3	___	25%	Arrests Eliminated	___
Possessing a controlled dangerous substance (drugs)	3	7	___	4	25%	___	133.33%
Possession and sale of a controlled dangerous substance (drugs)	0	3	___	3	25%	___	Arrests '77-'78 Only

Table 9

Comparison of Student Arrests at Vineland High School North for 1976-1977 and 1977-1978 School Year

Violation of Law	Number of Arrests 1976-1977	Number of Arrests 1977-1978	Number of Arrest Reductions During 1977-1978	Number of Arrest Increases During 1977-1978	Targeted Percent Reduction Established For The 1977-1978 Program	Percent Arrest Reduction Realized During 1977-1978	Percent Arrest Increase Realized During 1977-1978
Threatening behavior	2	1	1	___	25%	50%	___
Trespassing	1	2	___	1	25%	___	100%
Trespassing and resisting arrest	1	0	1	___	25%	Arrests Eliminated	___
Truancy	1	6	___	5	25%	___	500%
Truancy and incorrigible behavior	1	2	___	1	25%	___	100%
Total Summary	33	31	21	19	25%	6.06%	___